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THE CHRISTIAN MINISTRY AND
STEWARDSHIP.

A
S E R M O N

Preached before the
UNIVERSITY of OXFORD,
At St. MARY's,

On SUNDAY June 8. 1760.

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J. O. BROWNE,

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Jun. 27. 1760.

I. COR. CH. IV. v. 1, 2.

LET A MAN SO ACCOUNT OF US AS
OF THE MINISTERS OF CHRIST,
AND STEWARDS OF THE MYSTE-
RIES OF GOD. MOREOVER IT IS
REQUIRED IN STEWARDS THAT A
MAN BE FOUND FAITHFUL.

WHETHER we consider the
office of the Christian Ministry,
with respect to the near relation
it bears to the great Intercessor
and High Priest of our profession, the God-
Man Christ Jesus, as being a delegacy committed
by him to an order separated from all other
employments, and expressly set apart for sacred
purposes; or, if we view it with respect to the
important nature of its trust, the grand con-
cern of our Salvation, every serious and atten-
tive mind must of necessity be struck with the
dignity and weight of so high and solemn a
function.

THE Church of Christ is frequently repre-
sented in Scripture under the image of a So-
ciety.

ciety. Now in order to preserve the establishment and well being of every society some are deputed to undertake the government of it by a lawful commission, to whose authority others are in duty bound to submit, and are entitled to receive the benefits conveyed to them by the hands of their proper officers. And since this maxim obtains universally in societies of an earthly nature, it demands a more especial observance in that spiritual or heavenly society, the Church of God, wherein the Clergy, the appointed overseers, take care and provide for the Lord's family, and dispense out to them the life-giving food of his holy Word and Sacraments. It must betray then great levity, ignorance, or contumacy in any man to entertain low and disrespectful notions of that order, whose business it is to carry on the great designs of heaven, to transact an embassy from the KING OF KINGS, to sign and seal covenants in his name, to proclaim pardon to the returning sinner, to publish the glad tidings of free grace, and to beget heirs of eternal glory. The Apostle therefore, ever mindful of the honour due to the priestly office, throughout his Epistles commands that a peculiar reverence be paid to those who are entrusted with it, that they ought to be esteemed
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very highly in love for their works sake, as watching for the souls of their flock, and in the words of my text reminds his *Corinthian* converts, that *a man so account of us as of the Ministers of Christ, and Stewards of the Mysteries of God.* In discoursing upon which words I shall

First, endeavour to ascertain what is meant by a *Minister of Christ.* And

Secondly, to shew what we are given to understand by *Stewards of the Mysteries of God:*

WHICH will afford me an opportunity afterwards to enforce the duties enjoined under these characters — *it being required in Stewards that a Man be found faithful.*

BUT my first endeavour shall be to ascertain what is meant by a *Minister of Christ.*

IN order to derive the institution of the Christian Ministry from it's source and origin we must observe that as we are the Ministers of Christ, so Christ himself was the Minister of God ordained by a special commission from the Father. For it is an inviolable command that the priestly office be not presumptuously intruded into without a lawful and particular designation to it. *No Man*, saith the Apostle*,

* Heb. v. 4.°

*taketh this honour unto himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron: For how shall they preach except they be sent? Christ therefore, tho' without spot of sin and perfect in holiness, having the divine nature inseparably united to his human, tho' possessed of every personal qualification, yet as he came to fulfil all righteousness would not execute his office as Priest without an outward and visible appointment — even * Christ glorified not himself to be made an High Priest, but he that said unto him, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee, Thou art a Priest for ever — Which commission was proclaimed by the voice of God from Heaven at his Baptism, when the Holy Spirit descended upon him in bodily shape as a dove — And from that time 'tis remarked, that Jesus began to preach ||. — Being thus solemnly declared to be a Minister sent from God, he entered upon his Sacerdotal function, and as the Prophet Isaiah had foretold, † the Spirit of the Lord now rested upon him, because he had anointed him to preach the gospel to the poor, and had sent him to heal the broken hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that were*

* Heb. v. 5. || Matt. iv. 17. † Luke iv. 18, 19. Isa-
iah lxi. 1, 2.

bruised, and to preach the acceptable year of the Lord. Such was the ministerial office whereunto our divine Redeemer was appointed as Priest. And after his Resurrection being invested with all power in heaven and in earth, he *breathed* on his Disciples, and delivered the Keys of his Kingdom not to *Peter* only, but to the whole *Apostolic* body, promising to be with them (necessarily including by such promise their future successors in the Ministry) *alway even unto the end of the World.* Agreeable to the intent of this commission the power of ordination was solely exercised by the Apostles, and their substitutes the Bishops in the first ages of the Church; for as * *Theodoret* observes, "those whom we now call *Bishops*, the primitive Christians called *Apostles*," and according to St. || *Jerom*, "*Bishops* supply the place of the *Apostles*." As Christ himself by the act of breathing ordained the Apostles to be the Evangelists of his word, so did the Apostles and their representatives the Bishops by the imposition of hands send forth other labourers into the vineyard. Which practice is still continued in that pure, reformed, Episcopal Church of Christ to which we have the happiness to belong.

* In 1. Tim. iii. 1. || Epist. xxvii. ad Marcell.

BUT

BUT if we carefully attend to the words of the original promise — *Lo I am with you alway* — they imply a delegated power granted by our Lord to his Apostles, and to those whom they should hereafter ordain, whereby the virtue of his unchangeable Priesthood should continue among men even after his ascension into heaven. Christ himself was now about to appear in the presence of God for us, to be a perpetual Intercessor on our behalf. He therefore consecrated an order of men to officiate before him in holy things, by whose ministrations transacted in his name, the same gracious design of reconciliation to God thro' him should be carried on upon earth, which he would ratify and confirm above in Heaven. The Christian Priest then personates his Master Christ, being an Ambassador sent from him. And as in affairs of a civil nature the sanction of an Embassy proceeds not from him who bears it, but from the King in whose name it is authorized; so likewise in the sacred intercourse between God and Man by the mediation of the Priesthood, the several acts of the sacerdotal calling are rendered valid by the High Priest of our profession. The baptized is made a child of God, the sincere penitent upon his confession receives the benefit of absolution,

lution, and in the celebration of the Holy Eucharist the consecrated Elements of bread and wine which the Priest offers upon the altar below *commemoratively* are symbols and emblems of the body and blood of Christ which are the divine realities, and are presented by our Lord himself before his Father in heaven. Thus all things in the Church on earth are done according to the pattern of things in Heaven.

BUT what I have hitherto spoken respects only the outward and visible consecration to the Priesthood and the delegacy committed to this order by Christ thro' the hands of his representatives, by virtue of which the means of grace, notwithstanding any personal unworthiness, retain their saving efficacy when administered to *Believers*.

BUT the true Minister of Jesus Christ does not consider the holy function only as an authoritative commission to officiate in sacred things, but rather as a call and command to act with the Spirit of Christ, to continue his holiness, to bear a part of his sacrifice, and to devote himself for the good of others as he did. Tho' holiness gives no man a *commission* to exercise the pastoral charge, yet all who are called to it are as much ordained to a *peculiar holiness* of life, as to the *administration* of the Sacraments.

Sacraments. Would we conceive then aright of the office of a Christian Pastor, we must look at the office of Christ; for the work of the Ministry is only the work of Christ committed to other hands, who are to supply his absence, to be here in his stead, who came to seek and to save that which was lost, and has sent us on the same errand, to be doing the same things and with the same Spirit that he did, unto the end of the world. It is required therefore upon our first engaging in this work, that we declare openly before God in the presence of his Church, that we are * “inwardly moved by the Holy Ghost to take upon us this ministration for the promoting of the glory of God, and the edifying his people.” These words are not to be so understood as if we were impelled by a fancied heat of imagination, which we might consecrate by the name of a motion of the Holy Spirit: neither are they to be qualified in so lax a manner as to countenance our presumptuously undertaking so sacred an office with a design of serving God consistently with the worldly pursuits of interest and ambition. But certainly, if they mean any thing, they intend thus much, that upon a serious and deliberate consideration of

* See the Ordination Office.

the importance and holiness of the ministerial calling our own hearts can truly testify, the *Holy Spirit* at the same time *bearing witness with our Spirit*, that we do not enter upon it upon the selfish motive of acquiring honour, wealth, or fame, but with a steady and unfeigned resolution to dedicate ourselves to the service of God in promoting, as far as we can, the Salvation of our Brethren.

ON all these accounts the faithful Pastor thinks himself bound by the strictest obligations to preach; not himself, but *Christ Jesus the Lord*, and himself a Servant to the meanest Fellow Christian for Jesus' sake. And were the harmonious sound of a Saviour's name spread forth into all lands by the voice of those who take upon them to preach his Gospel, we might well break forth into Joy in the words of the Evangelical Prophet — * *How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace, that giveth good tidings of good, that publisheth Salvation.* For such a Minister, being conscious of the lawfulness of his appointment, and of the validity of the several acts of his calling by the delegacy committed to him, would set about in heart and good will to *do the work of*

* Isaiah lii. 7.

an Evangelist, and would study to shew himself approved to his heavenly Master, as well by the holiness of his own conversation, as by his unwearied diligence in converting Sinners from the error of their way, and leading them into the paths of righteousness and peace.

BEING thus zealously determined to know nothing save Jesus Christ and him crucified, he will consider himself as a *Steward* of the *Mysteries* of God; which was the second point I purposed to explain.

THE Communion of Saints or Church of the redeemed, taken in a general sense, constitutes the whole family of God in Heaven and in earth. Now the supreme Head and Governor of this family is Jesus Christ, the fountain of all principality and power, who whilst absent from his members on earth in his state of exaltation at God's right hand in Glory, deposes his ministers to officiate as Stewards to his Household. The same relation therefore which domestic stewards stand in to their earthly masters is that which is occupied by the Clergy in respect to their heavenly one. And in order faithfully to discharge the office, the same duties are equally required from the one as from the other. The business of a steward is to act as Vicegerent to his Lord,

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to keep safe that which is committed to his care, to dispense out provision for the use of the household, and ever to conduct himself with singleness of heart, as having his Master's interest solely in view, and being accountable to him for the improvement of the talent wherewith he is entrusted. This being the nature of the office, our next inquiry must be to investigate what is the sacred *depositum* delivered in charge to the Stewards of the Household of Faith, which the Apostle here expresseth under the name of the *Mysteries* of God.

THE Term *Mystery* is too frequently supposed to signify a proposition of so dark and abstruse a nature as to be utterly incomprehensible by the powers of the Human Understanding, or to admit of any explication whatever. But the usage of this word in Scripture, if duly attended to, ought certainly to obviate and remove so vulgar a prejudice. St. Paul professeth to **speake the wisdom of God in a Mystery*, even the mystery of God's will which he had †*made known to him by Revelation*, and supposeth it a possible case to || *understand all mysteries*. And in the opinion of a learned and judicious § Divine, mysteries are to

* 1 Cor. ii. 7. † Eph. iii. 3. || 1 Cor. xiii. 2. § See Leslie's Theol. Works, vol. 1. History of Sin and Heresy.

be inquired into, why else were they revealed? It does not affect the point in question, and consequently ought not to be looked upon as an impediment to an inquiry carried on in a spirit of meekness and humility, tho' we grant, as we readily do, that we cannot fully and adequately comprehend a mysterious truth, when revealed, with all it's relations, connexions and dependences, while in our embodied state we know only in part, and behold spiritual objects as in a glass, not *darkly*, according to our translation, but *enigmati- cally*, by *reflection* or *representation*. This consideration, I say, ought not to obstruct our inquiry, but rather to excite our zeal and industry, that we may each, according to our several capacities and the different measures of divine grace afforded to us, attain to our portion of spiritual knowledge conveyed under an outward cover to our understanding, in a manner suitable to the nature of our intellectual faculties, which can no otherwise receive it but as proposed in a symbolical or allegorical way of expression. To the natural or carnal man, who in his unconverted state knows not the things of God, the outward letter is the ministration of death; but to the spiritual eye, which God hath opened to see the deep things which he
hath

hath revealed, the veil is taken off, and it becomes the favour of life unto life. But what can this glass mean, unless it be the visible creation or the objects of sense, thro' the media of which the invisible things of God are clearly seen, being presented to the eye of Faith? And the greek word * *μυστήριον* does in its signification favour this construction, since it is used in the same sense with the latin *Sacramentum*, which in the language of our Church is an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace. To unfold then or explain a mystery is to penetrate thro' the outward cover of the killing letter, in order to come at the spiritual and life-giving truth shadowed out under it. And in this sense it is used by St. Paul in a particular passage in his Epistle to the *Ephesians*, where having set forth the reciprocal affection and relative duties between Husband and Wife he concludes with saying that he spake a great Mystery, and that concerning Christ and his Church ||: Herein most indubitably the outward symbol of conjugal love is the image whereby the mystical union subsisting between

* *Μυστήριον*. Res, quâ externo quodam symbolo proposito aliud quid mysticè innuitur, & repræsentatur, *sacramentum*. Ab Heb. *סֵתֶר* quod rem absconditam denotat, estq; a radice *סֵתֶר* abscondit, occultavit. Mintert. Lex. || Chap. v. 32.

Christ and his Church is adumbrated. And St. *John* in the first chapter of the Revelation expressly determines the *mystery of the seven stars* and the *seven golden candlesticks* to be a representation of *the seven angels of the seven churches*. In conformity to this received usage of the word *Mystery*, the Ministers of the Gospel or Stewards of the divine mysteries therein recorded are compared to * *Oxen treading out the Corn*. According to this beautiful image the treading out the corn out of the husk seemeth plainly to import the expounding the dead outward letter so as to make it fit for spiritual food.

SEEING then we are constituted Ministers not of the letter but of the Spirit, the Spiritual expositions of the blessed Scriptures couched under their various images, whether *Parables*, *Proverbs*, *Types*, or *Allegories*, conspiring to delineate Christ and his heavenly kingdom begun in grace and hereafter to be consummated in glory, seem in a more especial manner to denote those holy mysteries, of which God hath made us the Stewards and Guardians, thereby marking out to us our peculiar province, *viz.* to exercise our minds in this true wisdom which descendeth from

* 1 Tim. v. 18.

above, that the knowledge and love of Christ may dwell in us richly, both for our own illumination and profit, and that we may be qualified to apply these saving truths to the different exigences of those whose souls are committed to our care, in order to build up in them the * *hidden Man of the Heart*.

It is not to be denied but that by the mysteries of the Christian Religion are also frequently understood the more sublime doctrines upon which it is founded, such as the existence of the ever-blessed Trinity in Unity, the Incarnation of the second Person, the oeconomic office of the Holy Ghost, and the manner of his operation in the Hearts of Believers, and the resurrection of the dead, doctrines, which tho' farther still above the reach of our limited understanding fully to comprehend, yet are delivered either under natural images or instituted representations, and as they involve no contradiction, and have the seal of divine authority stamped upon them, ought in justice to bow down the Pride of Human Reason ever ready to exalt its vain imaginations against the Wisdom of God, so as to produce a hearty and unfeigned assent. And moreover, forasmuch as the redemption of every soul of

* 1 Pet. iii. 4.

man,

man, the satisfaction paid for his sins, the regeneration and gradual purification of his heart, and in short his everlasting salvation depend upon the truth of these doctrines inwardly applied, they are solemnly committed in trust to the stewards of the Household of Faith, who are bound by every tie of obligation to execute their charge with integrity.

FOR it is required in *Stewards* that a man be found *faithful*.

NOW the characteristic of a steward is that of acting as Vicegerent to his Lord, which as it coincides with the office of a Minister will give me an opportunity of laying before you in one view, the duties required of those who are called to each of these stations.

THE faithfulness of a Minister or Steward consists principally in these three things. First, in keeping safe that which is committed to his trust. Secondly, in dispensing out provision for the use of the Household. And thirdly, in conducting himself with singleness of heart, solely intent upon promoting his Master's interest, as knowing that he will shortly be called upon to give an account of his Stewardship.

IT will not be necessary to recapitulate the several particulars delivered in charge to the stewards

stewards of God, after so distinct an enumeration of them in the explanation of the word *mystery*. But since the execution of our trust depends upon a thorough knowledge of the duties required of us, which are clearly taught in Scripture, it is evident that if we would be true to our charge, we must first of all consult with constancy and fidelity, that grand charter of our commission, the *written Word of God*. At the time of our ordination we receive authority to preach this holy word, and the resolution we enter into in the presence of God and his Church is "to use all diligence in prayer, and in reading of the Holy Scriptures, and in such studies as help to the knowledge of the same, laying aside the study of the world and the flesh." How strictly we have observed these sacred engagements it becomes every one of us to ask our own consciences. For tho' we are by no means called off from an application to such human studies as tend to cultivate and enlarge the understanding, and are proper for a person of a liberal education to be acquainted with, yet even these literary pursuits, when followed by men of piety as well as learning, may be made use of as instruments

* See the Ordination Office.

to draw water from the wells of Salvation. And the Christian Scholar, who hath acquired the knowledge of the learned languages, and hath been taught by the rules of Logic to methodize his thoughts, and to exercise his faculties in the art of reasoning, will enjoy the unspeakable advantage of being able both to study God's word in the Original, and to fortify himself from this divine armoury with weapons the most proper to the point in hand to repel every attack of the enemy. It was *St. Paul's* commendation of his beloved *Timothy*, that from a child he had known the Holy Scriptures, which were able to make him wise unto Salvation; and we may be bold to affirm, that whoever in his earlier years cometh to this fountain of knowledge with a child-like simplicity, and earnest desire to be taught of God, will be gradually led into all truth, according as he is able to bear it, until he also, as well as *Timothy*, is instructed unto the kingdom of heaven. To be deeply conversant with the Scriptures, wherein God himself speaketh unto us must be the first business of a steward who would *know his Lord's will and fulfil it*.

NEXT to the word of God let him reverence the writings of the primitive Fathers, some of whom immediately by conversing with
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the Apostles, others by hearing their first disciples, caught from their hallowed lips the sacred fire of divine knowledge animated with love, which they diffused throughout the world, propagating the saving truths they had newly learned with a zeal enabling them to triumph even under the pangs of the most painful martyrdom.

BUT to the steward of this our household in a more especial manner is committed the guardianship of our excellent Liturgy, together with the Articles and Homilies, which as they now stand reformed from the errors of Popery, and breathe forth the genuine Spirit of the Scriptures, as well in doctrine as in practice, must be allowed, upon a comparison being made, to form the best constituted Church this day in the world.

NOR will the faithful Minister of Christ rest here, knowing that the confession of the soundest faith availeth nothing unless it work by love. Conscious of the depravity of his fallen nature he will apprehend the force of that saying of our Lord, * "*when thou art converted strengthen thy brethren,*" and will therefore learn to experience in himself wherein

* Luke. xxii. 32.

real conversion consists, before he undertakes to reform others.

FIRST then he will preach to himself, will labour by the assistance of God's grace to regulate his own passions, to subdue his natural corruptions, and particularly to obtain the mastery over that sin which more easily besets him, whether Pride, Anger, Voluptuousness, or whatever other unmortified affection. Nay farther, it will be the daily and earnest desire of his mind to grow in grace, to attain to higher degrees of meekness, humility, patience, resignation, self-denial, purity, and love unfeigned towards God and Man: So that, having searched and meditated on the Scripture, and having applied to such other studies as help to the knowledge of the same, like unto a good householder he will bring forth out of his treasure things new and old; and forasmuch as he himself is trained up in the divine Life, and taught by experience how to overcome the world, the flesh, and the devil thro' faith in a crucified Saviour, he will be qualified rightly to divide the word of truth and to dispense out provision for the Lord's family, giving to each their portion in due season.

IN performing this part of his duty constant
care

care and vigilance are necessarily required at his hands.

THAT younger persons may from their infancy be brought up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, good principles must be instilled, as early as possible, into their minds; and no method of doing this promises better success (nor indeed where practised has been more signally blessed), than the custom of *catechising*. Our church catechism is in itself the most compleat epitome of Christianity, such as in the exposition of it will afford to the Pastor the best opportunity of instructing the ignorant, and enforcing every article of Faith or Duty. The advantage of forming to early habits of goodness the tender minds of youth yet unprejudiced by error and untainted by vice seems to speak so strongly for itself, that one cannot help surmising, if the ancient practice of catechising were universally restored, it might lay a lasting foundation for the suppression of wickedness, and the maintenance of true religion and virtue in succeeding generations.

BUT the more general way of communicating religious knowledge is by *preaching*, which indeed was made the first instrument of converting the world, and is now a chief means

of

calling home wandring sinners to the Shepherd and Bishop of their Souls.

IN these public discourses to the congregation, which for the most part consists of persons almost as different in respect to their state in religion as in their complexion, the faithful Minister, zealous for the salvation of all, will address himself to each in particular, according to their respective circumstances. The dreadful threats of God's law must be denounced against the openly vicious and profane; the careless who sleep on securely in their sins must be awakened to a sense of their danger; the inward and vital power of godliness must be pressed home to those who attend the outward form; the weak but sincere Christian is to be comforted; the babes or adults in Christ are to be fed with milk or stronger meat in proportion to the measure of their stature; the most perfect must be exhorted to perseverance in watchfulness and prayer; and it will be requisite to lay before *all* the necessity of being arrayed in a better righteousness than their own, even the imputed righteousness of a Redeemer, in order to obtain justification in the sight of God.

BUT besides this food distributed in public by catechising and preaching, other occasions
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of nourishing the household of Faith will frequently occur, wherein it will be highly proper to give seasonable admonitions in private, especially in the *visitation of the sick*. This trying scene demands great skilfulness and integrity in the Divine who is called upon to treat with a soul about to depart into a state of everlasting happiness or misery. For alas! the Physician of the soul is seldom sent for, till life is pronounced to be in danger. And how affecting the scene, when the soul hovers over the brink of eternity, before she has made her peace with God! Her spiritual guide must needs be previously acquainted with the terms of the covenant confirmed of God in Christ. Our church hath adjudged it so absolutely necessary, that in the office for visiting the sick the words of one of the collects run thus, "the Lord make thee to know and feel that there is none other name given to man, in whom and thro' whom thou mayest receive health and salvation, but only the name of our Lord Jesus Christ." And moreover it will require a deep penetration and insight into the workings of the human breast, to discern a real heart-felt contrition from one excited thro' fear of death, to be able to apply the promises of the Gospel judiciously, so as neither

ther to buoy up the soul with false hopes, nor yet to refrain from speaking comfort where it may and ought to be administered. Repentance towards God and Faith in our Lord Jesus Christ are the general terms to be insisted upon. Particular circumstances must vary according to the state and condition of the patient.

AND in each of these ministerial duties the faithful steward will conduct himself with *singleness of heart*, solely intent upon promoting his master's interest, as knowing that he will shortly be called upon to give an account of his stewardship.

UNDER the influence of this principle he will never dare to lord it over God's heritage, neither in exercising necessary acts of discipline will he exert any unjust authority over those committed to his care; but, like his blessed Master, who came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, he will condescend to the infirmities of his flock, and bear with their weaknesses in a spirit of meekness and patience. His zeal for God's glory will not break out into intemperate heat of passion, because *the wrath of man*, he well knoweth, *worketh not the righteousness of God*, but being directed by knowledge and discretion will burn
with

with a steady even flame of holy love. And as he keeps himself free from every act of domineering, so likewise in his intercourse with his flock he will make it apparent that he undertaketh the oversight thereof *not for filthy lucre sake, but of a ready mind.* It is but just indeed that they who surrender their pretensions to the bar, the camp, the exchange, and quit all secular employments that they may preach the Gospel, should live of the Gospel, and that in a manner suitable to their education; but an upright steward will renounce every degree of extortion, oppression, or whatever favours of covetousness, with the utmost abhorrence. His eye being alway directed to the service of his master, he will often anticipate in thought and meditation the process of that great day, when he shall be called upon to deliver in his accounts. Antecedent therefore to his final trial, lest after having preached to others, he himself should be a castaway, he will examine himself by such like preparatory questions. Whether the belief of the Gospel hath had it's due influence upon his heart and life? Whether he is seriously engaged in working out his own Salvation, since in order to instruct others in the ways of holiness he himself ought to be exercised therein? Whether in his

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ministrations

ministrations among his flock he seeketh his own profit, or *the profit of many that they may be saved?* Whether he carrieth himself toward them with that affection which may convince them that he hath their Salvation at heart, and that he hopeth to meet them at the right hand of God, as so many seals of his ministry? And lastly, in order to attain this blessed end, whether he declareth unto them the whole counsel of God from the oracles of truth, leading them on both by precept and example, as much as lieth in him, in the way to heaven?

THESE are some few outlines of the pastoral duty. But seeing that so great and important a charge lieth upon the clergy, we may be induced to ask, who is sufficient for these things? So thought the holy Men of old: Even the Prophet *Jeremiab*, who was sanctified from the womb, nevertheless cried out, when the word of the Lord came unto him to appoint him to the sacred office: *Ab! Lord God, behold I cannot speak, for I am a child**. And in the primitive Church the most eminent men trembled under the awful sense they entertained of the sacerdotal function, as is reported of *Ambrose*, *Chrysostom*, and others. But the same Divine Power which raised up

* Jer. i. 6.

their drooping hearts, and emboldened them to witness a good confession before men, is ready at hand to strengthen us also, provided we ask for help in the manner they did. Let us therefore, as we are directed in the exhortation for the ordering of Priests, "continually pray to God the Father, by the mediation of our only Saviour Jesus Christ, for the heavenly assistance of the Holy Ghost." For tho' we are not sufficient of ourselves for the accomplishment of this or any other good work, yet the Spirit of Prayer will derive down upon us virtue from above to qualify us for the office whereunto we are ordained. And let me add, that we shall find no scene of life blessed with such happy opportunities of laying in a treasure of sacred knowledge, for future services, as that wherein we are at present situated.

THESE seats are in a peculiar manner consecrated to the purposes of Religion and Learning. And to their honour be it spoken, that many burning and shining lights have in every generation been sent forth from them, who have spread far and wide the knowledge of the glorious Gospel, speaking the words of sound doctrine. May the Lord dispose all our hearts to tread in the steps of these our worthy predecessors. Be it then our care to apply with
diligence

diligence to the studies of our heavenly calling, and to implore the blessing of God upon them, that * “waxing riper and stronger in the ministry,” we may contend for the *faith once delivered to the Saints*, and may attain unto that personal *holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord*. So shall we most effectually promote the glory of God, and the salvation of our brethren; preserve peace and unanimity in the church; prove a blessing to the nation; and finally, for our short and imperfect services here, shall hereafter receive an everlasting reward, when the Lord of the household at his second coming shall say unto every *faithful steward of his mysteries* — *Well done thou good Servant, enter thou into thy Master's Joy*.

* See the Ordination Office.

THE END.